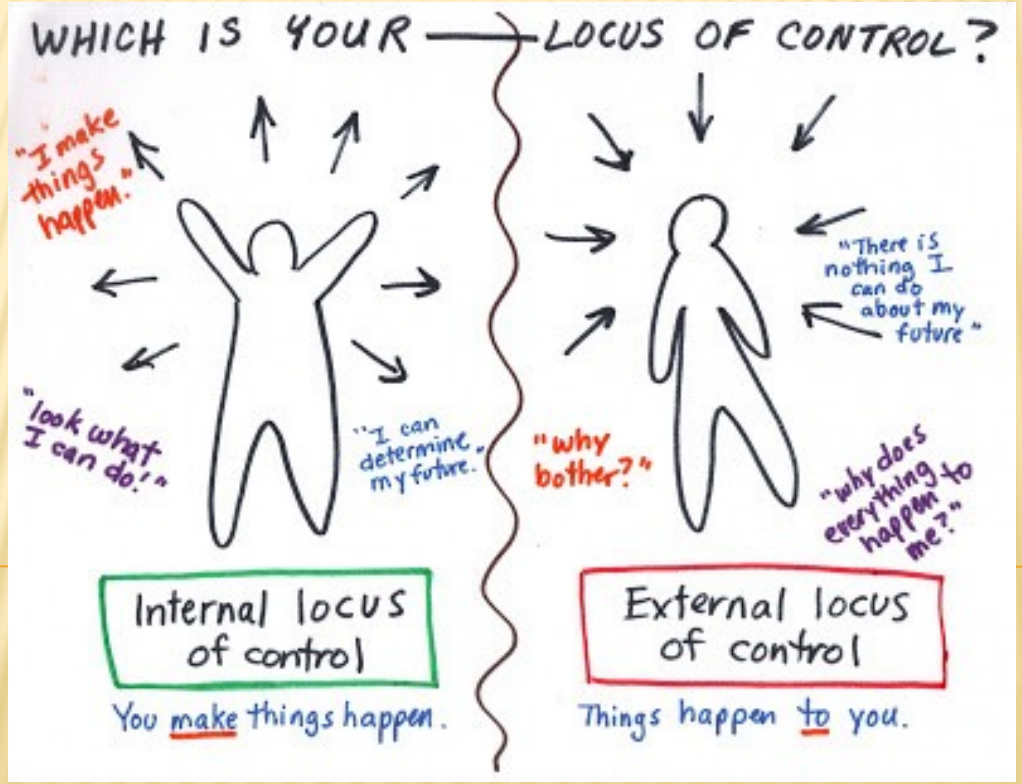
LOCUS OF CONTROL

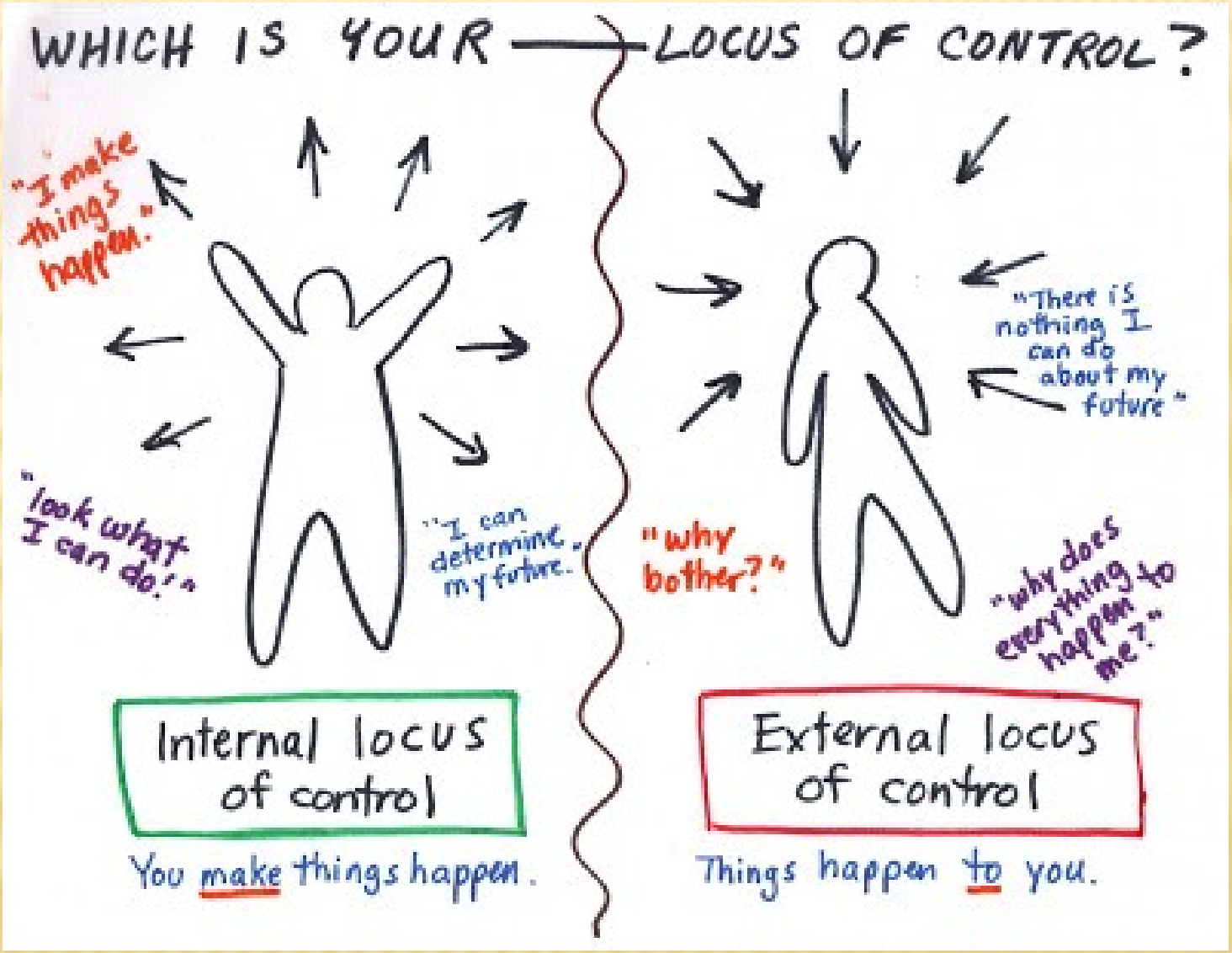
Jullian Rotter


WHICH IS YOUR LOCUS OF CONTROL?
"I make things happen."
"look what I can do!"
"I can determine my future."
"why bother?"
"There is nothing I can do about my future"
"why does everything happen to me?"
Internal locus of control
You make things happen.
External locus of control
Things happen to you.

JULIAN ROTTER'S LEARNING THEORY OF PERSONALITY

Rotter combined behaviorism and the study of personality, without relying on physiological instincts or drives as a motive force. The main idea in **Julian Rotter's social learning theory** is that personality represents an interaction of the individual with his or her environment.

Locus of Control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Locus of Control

Locus of Control as a principle was originated by Julian Rotter in 1954. It considers the tendency of people to believe that control resides internally within them, or externally, with others or the situation.

Note that, like other preferences, this is a spectrum. Some people have a wholly internal or external locus of control, but many will have some balance both views, perhaps varying with situation. For example some may be more internal at home but more external at work.

Locus of Control

Internal Locus of Control

People with a high internal locus of control believe in their own ability to control themselves and influence the world around them. They see their future as being in their own hands and that their own choices lead to success or failure.

Rotter (1990) describes the internal locus of control as:

'the degree to which persons expect that a reinforcement or an outcome of their behavior is contingent on their own behavior or personal characteristics‘

Locus of Control

Internal Locus of Control ….

Their belief in their ability to change things may well make them more confident and they will hence seek information that will help them influence people and situations. They will also likely be more motivated and success-oriented. These beliefs may even lead them to be more politically active.

They are more likely to have *expectancy shifts*, where a sequence of similar events are expected to have different outcomes. They tend to be more specific, generalizing less and considering each situation as unique. People in middle age tend to have the highest internal locus of control.
A downside of an internal locus of control is that, in

Locus of Control

External Locus of control

People with a high external locus of control believe that control over events and what other people do is outside them, and that they personally have little or no control over such things. They may even believe that others have control over them and that they can do nothing but obey.

Rotter (1990) describes the external locus of control as:

'the degree to which persons expect that the reinforcement or outcome is a function of chance, luck, or fate, is under

Locus of Control

External Locus of Control

With such beliefs, people with an external locus of control tend to be fatalistic, seeing things as happening to them and that there is little they can do about it. This tends to make them more passive and accepting. When they succeed, they are more likely to attribute this to luck than their own efforts.

They are less likely to have expectancy shifts, seeing similar events as likely to have similar outcomes. they hence step back from events, assuming they cannot make a difference.

Younger and older people tend to have higher external locus of control than people in middle age.

Locus of Control

Stability

A factor that affects both internal and external locus of control is the stability of the causal factor. Common attributed causes in each of the four cases are shown the table below:

Four common attributed causes

Locus of Control

	Internal	External
Stable	**Ability**	**Task difficulty**
Unstable	**Effort**	**Luck**

Hence a person with stable internal locus of control will likely assume that failure is due to a lack of their ability, whilst a person with unstable external locus of control might say they were unlucky.

Locus of Control

Internal Position may well help

Understand the preference of the person and the stability of the cause being discussed. If you want to build rapport, attribute to similar causes. If you want to challenge, get them to consider alternative causes or change their locus of control.

If you want people to take more control of their lives, act in a more healthy way or become more successful at studies or work, then encouraging them to take a more internal position may well help.

Thank You